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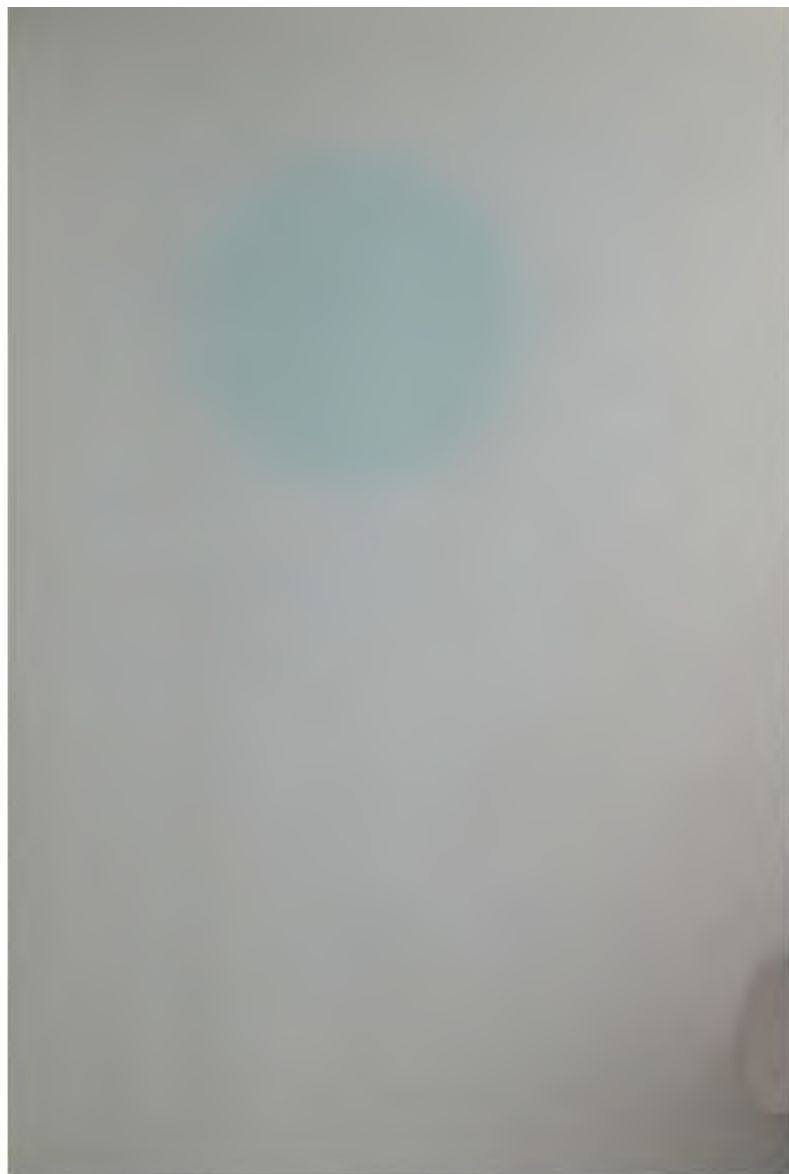
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Call, William Timothy

Ellsworth's checker book





Ellsworth's Checker Book

BY WILLIAM TIMOTHY CALL

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Played well, no other pastime is so replete with hidden wonders, or possesses so harmless and increasing a fascination for those who acquire a liking for the game. Its profound intricacy is to a certain degree incomprehensible, yet its rules and principles are so simple that almost any person, with a few days' practice and study, can gain a limited knowledge of the game.—*Cyclopedia of Card and Table Games*.

PREFACE.

CHARLES ELLSWORTH, the expert blind checker player, lost his life through falling from a railway station in Newark, N. J., September 17, 1898. The newspapers stated that his full name was Charles Ellsworth McCandless and that his home was in Boston, Mass. He was about thirty-five years of age, and for a long time had made his living by playing mechanical accuracy that I finally suggested to him that a book based on his knowledge and experience would be useful to beginners and amateurs. He was pleased with the idea, and thought ordinary players would appreciate such a book, if the extended analysis of the text books of the game could be avoided. The outline manuscript was completed and its chief points discussed but a few days before his death. The original preface (to be over his name) was in part as follows:

I became personally acquainted with him at Bergen Beach, New York, where he played during the season immediately preceding his death. Day after day I watched his play against all comers, and was so impressed by its almost mechanical accuracy that I finally suggested to him that a book based on his knowledge and experience would be useful to beginners and amateurs. He was pleased with the idea, and thought ordinary players would appreciate such a book, if the extended analysis of the text books of the game could be avoided. The outline manuscript was completed and its chief points discussed but a few days before his death. The original preface (to be over his name) was in part as follows:

"I have been asked many times for the secret of the game of checkers. There is no secret, rule or method that will enable a person to become an expert player. The game is a plain mathematical problem, running into so vast a number of changes that it is practically unsolvable. There is a way, however, of making rapid progress toward the expert class, and that is by understanding the purpose of moves which experience and recorded play show to be good. To this end I shall present a partial study of two lines which are most popular, Black forming the opening in one and White in the other. Under the heading 'Advice' I give some of the general principles on which my regular play is grounded, and there and elsewhere show how to proceed to build up a strong game, and how to avoid being led into weak lines."

Ellsworth played a merciless game, however poor a player his opponent might be. He always took the strongest move he could find, and thus commanded the admiration of the public and held the respect of experts. When he succeeded in gaining an advantage, either in position or in number of pieces, his play was admirable. No careless or "brilliant if sound" moves were made by him, but he would proceed to tie up his adversary in the most effective way, not overlooking any exchange that would shorten the contest or increase the decisiveness or completeness of his victory. When novices complained of his ungenerous tactics, he would quietly reply that he was playing checkers and was not familiar with parlor amusements. His "regular customers" stuck to him persistently because he would not let them beat him if he could help it.

Owing to the great amount and variety of his practice, he was an exceedingly strong end game player. He could see (or feel, for he quickly ran over the board with his hands after each play) a familiar ending "coming up" long before it took form to the ordinary player.

But few experts equaled Ellsworth in crossboard end play. I do not believe, however, that in a world's congress of experts Ellsworth would have figured as one of the greatest players, nor do I think he was a checker genius. That he had a remarkable knowledge of the board may be easily understood when it is remembered that he played checkers for a living and had been sightless from his childhood.

He was conversant with the best play on all the openings as given in the books, and took especial delight in forcing his adversary into unexplored paths, as he knew few could successfully cope with him in a checker wilderness. In this way he frequently brought chagrin to the faces of players of high standing.

It was a rare occurrence when anyone succeeded in leading him into a trap, and it was, perhaps, as seldom that he failed to find any effective stroke the position afforded him. In endings he would "plant" his pieces on the commanding squares with what seemed to the observer to be instinctive accuracy, but which was, in fact, acquired knowledge, through a long course of experience and study.

He played so rapidly, and he so politely told his opponents to take their time and not to hurry, that the public came to regard him as a kind of automaton. Even in difficult positions against fine players he would pick out the strong moves in an astonishingly

short time, because he played the game so much that it was not necessary for him to waste thought on moves intrinsically weak though plausible.

With all the tricks and traps of end positions known to experts he was so familiar from constant practice that he could play the best moves on either side without hesitation or analysis, and could explain their purpose to players sufficiently advanced to understand the advantage or disadvantage, as the case might be, of "having the move." He had, too, an intimate acquaintance with a very large number of what may be described as "stock positions" of the middle game; that is, formations that are characteristic of certain openings, or that are frequently brought about in various ways.

Ellsworth was much liked by the public, as he could give and take banter without bitterness, and seldom talked about himself or his misfortune except jocosely. He had been well instructed in all the ordinary branches of knowledge, including natural philosophy, and had an acute ear for correct pronunciation. Some of his attempts in the line of useful mechanical inventions indicated marked aptitude for clear thinking. He traveled about unaccompanied, and at the time of his death had planned a trip through the chief checker-playing centres of the New England States. He often said he believed he could start out alone with his board under his arm, and earn his way all over the world where the game is popular. He did a good service to the cause of checkers by demonstrating to the public that it is a scientific pastime.

When asked for his opinion regarding the superiority of chess or checkers from a scientific standpoint his reply was that since in chess the purpose of most moves is apparent while in checkers it is hidden, it is idle to compare them; but he was firm in the belief that it is easier to become a good chess player than a good checker player. Quoting a great chess master, who is also a checker expert, he would say: "Chess is what you see; checkers is what you know."

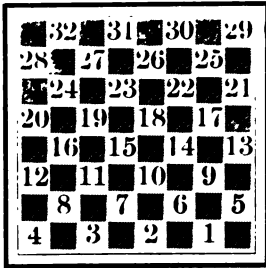
WILLIAM TIMOTHY CALL.

New York, June, 1899.

The Board.

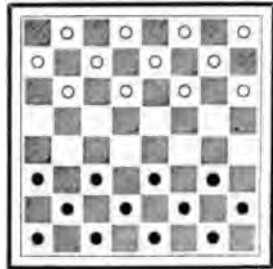
Each square of the checker board has a number and the men are placed as shown in these diagrams :

White.



Black.

White.



Black.

Black always starts the game.

Each player has the Black pieces in turn.

“ Right hand double corner ” is the correct old-fashioned rule for placing the board.

To avoid confusion, it is usual to place the men on the black squares, but for the sake of distinctness the white squares are ordinarily utilized in printed diagrams.

The Openings.

At least a hundred names have been given to the various openings of the game of checkers. In some instances half a dozen names have been applied to the same set of opening moves, according to the particular locality or coterie of players favoring those moves. The game has suffered from this practice, as many who have an aptitude for correct play have given up book study on account of the difficulty of even identifying so many openings. It would undoubtedly be better for all interested if there were fewer named openings than at present, but it must be admitted that there are twenty-eight that are recognized as standard wherever the game is played. Of these eighteen are formed by the first player, Black, and ten by White. These openings are classified below, and a way to avoid such of them as cannot be forced is indicated. The purpose of this arrangement is to assist the novice to confine the play as much as possible to familiar ground. The amateur may thus neutralize a large part of the expert's book knowledge at the start. All openings, however, are supposed to be sound, although some are by the verdict of experience and analysis regarded as weak.

OPENINGS FORMED BY BLACK.

Old Fourteenth: 11-15 23-19 8-11 22-17 4-8.

These moves open a game that is more generally played than any other except the Single Corner. The common variations are played mechanically up to the endings by about every one who owns a checker book. The best moves on each side seem to spring from a process of natural selection up to a decisive point in the ordinary lines of this historic opening. See "Black's Most Popular Opening" farther on in this book.

Glasgow: 11-15 23-19 8-11 22-17 11-16.

This is probably the "safest" opening Black can adopt. No other game allows Black to keep the draw so distinctly in sight as the Glasgow. The opportunities of forming a winning combination are correspondingly lessened. Beginners should stick to the Old Fourteenth, however, by playing 4-8 instead of 11-16.

Alma: 11-15 23-19 8-11 22-17 3-8.

Not considered strong for Black, as it allows White great scope for tricky play. The Old Fourteenth move, 4-8, is preferable to the Alma move, 3-8.

Laird and Lady: 11-15 23-19 8-11 22-17 9-13.

Young players should avoid this intricate game, which is apt to drain the analytical power of the player having the Black side. The Old Fourteenth is formed by 4-8 in place of 9-13.

Centre: 11-15 23-19 8-11 22-17 15-18.

This gives White so formidable an attack that Black would do better, as usual, by 4-8 rather than 15-18, thus forming the staple Old Fourteenth.

Black Doctor: 11-15 23-19 8-11 22-17 9-13 17-14 10-17 19-10 7-14.

All these moves are necessary to form this peculiar opening, which is regarded as strong for Black. It should be shunned, however, by undergraduates in the usual way, forming the old Fourteenth by 4-8 at the fifth move.

Whilter: 11-15 23-19 9-14 22-17 7-11.

A safe and very pretty game for Black. But a beginner who has made a study of the Old Fourteenth should play 8-11 in place of 9-14 at the third move.

Souter: 11-15 23-19 9-14 22-17 6-9.

This game is all right for Black, and has a certain fascinating quality that is apt to draw promising youngsters away from the style of play they have been accustomed to adopt before coquetting with the Souter. Avoid it by playing 8-11 where 9-14 is given. [Ellsworth was always pleased when a strong amateur Souter player came along.]

Fife: 11-15 23-19 9-14 22-17 5-9.

Although the Fife carries the endorsement of some of the greatest players and analysts the game of checkers has produced, it is not an opening to be recommended to ordinary followers of the pastime. Play 8-11 at the third move, as in the Old Fourteenth.

Will o' the Wisp: 11-15 23-19 9-13.

If a complete analysis of this opening could be had it would probably show that it is a White win. This is necessarily a mere guess, but it is generally admitted that it is not a strong opening for Black. It should be left out of the student's list of necessary openings, anyway, as 8-11 is the Old Fourteenth play at the third move.

Dyke : 11-15 22-17 15-19.

Up to this point in the openings as here given, White's reply to 11-15 has been 23-19. In the Dyke game the second player varies by going 22-17. Black might now be able to throw the play into the familiar Old Fourteenth, but he cannot force it into that opening. Hence the apparently daring 15-19, which is in fact a very strong move. It is not by any means essential to adopt the Dyke opening, but this bold attack so narrows the game, and leads to a style of play so satisfactory and so clearly defined, that familiarity with its characteristic straight line formations should be regarded as an important part of the equipment of every ambitious checker player.

Maid of the Mill : 11-15 22-17 8-11 17-13 15-18.

Not often played nowadays, as it is acknowledged to be strong for Black and is consequently avoided by White. Play the Dyke move 15-19 instead of 8-11.

Bristol : 11-16.

As a starting move, 11-16 is next in general favor to the regulation 11-15, and is preferred by many because it does not invite or in fact permit such a great variety of sound play as the latter. The usual reply is 24-20, Black countering with 16-19, which is now recognized as the characteristic move of the Bristol opening. For other forms of the Bristol see Paisley and Bristol-Cross openings.

Kelso : 10-15.

A very good opening. The Kelso used to be classed among the weak attacks, but its effectiveness is now well established.

Double Corner: 9-14.

This, like every other first move of Black, is perfectly sound, but as it frequently runs into the Bristol, Glasgow, Dyke, Whilter and other games, it is very difficult for any but experts to confine the succeeding moves to genuine Double Corner play. White's most puzzling defence is 24-20, but any move, except, of course, 21-17, is good, 22-18 and 22-17 being the most popular.

Edinburgh: 9-13.

Undoubtedly inferior to 11-15, 11-16, or 9-14, and running into the published play of other openings as a rule. The common reply is 22-18, but 24-20 is apt to make Black wince.

Denny: 10-14.

Weak, but of course sound. White almost always plays 22-17 without hesitation.

Dundee: 12-16.

Not to be recommended, as Black usually finds his operations confined to somewhat narrow limits soon after this start. White's best attack is 24-20, but he has other good advances, 22-18 being one of the strongest.

OPENINGS FORMED BY WHITE.

Defiance: 11-15 23-19 9-14 27-23.

White now has a good game in hand. He could not get this opening, however, if Black had taken the usual course, 8-11, at third move.

White Dyke: 11-15 22-17 8-11 17-14,

Not so weak for White as it may appear to the uninitiated. The peculiar play of the Dyke, whether formed by Black or White, should be comprehended, for it is a mechanical kind of game, and the common remark, "It's all in the end," seems to apply with especial fitness to the Dyke. Black may avoid the White Dyke advantageously by playing 15-19 at the third move, thus turning the opening into the Dyke proper.

Single Corner: 11-15 22-18.

It is not likely that any one will question the statement that the Single Corner has been and is played much more frequently than any other opening. Everybody plays it, nobody masters it. Thousands of variations have been published, and its possibilities have not only not been exhausted, but it is admitted that there are numberless byways in its province that have never been explored. Although neither side is believed to have any advantage when the opening is completed, it will be found that White is more frequently led into apparently desperate situations than Black. The ingenious devices to which White must constantly resort seem to indicate that Black has the better side, and that has been stated to be the opinion of experts. One compiler counted the wins of each side in the standard books and found a great excess in Black's favor. It is something like heresy to say that the Single Corner is a weak opening, because of its historic career, but it is at least an exceedingly difficult game to play correctly, and old time "natural players" continue to be easy victims to young experts largely through their faith in the efficacy of the Single Corner game. See "White's Most Popular Opening" in succeeding pages.

Cross: 11-15 23-18.

One of White's best openings, and a favorite with all grades of players. Must be "looked up" by every one who habitually starts the game with 11-15. Black replies with 8-11, and whether White goes 27-23 or 26-23 Black is safe with 4-8.

Second Double Corner: 11-15 24-19 15-24 28-19.

For a long time this opening was thought to be a poor one, but the experts worked on it so persistently that it is now in first class repute. It is true that White must play "just so," but that is not difficult to do after the general style of the resulting game is comprehended. It is perhaps easier to learn how to play a Second Double Corner opening to a draw than any other within the power of White to make. Black's ordinary response is 8-11, although 9-14 is undoubtedly stronger; but even against that supposedly invincible move, White may find plenty of play leading to a sure draw, with a possible win here and there. Black cannot carelessly play against the Second Double Corner without wondering where his game broke down.

Switcher: 11-15 21-17.

A puzzling opening of uncertain value; to be shunned by any one who has not made a special study of it.

Ayrshire Lassie: 11-15 24-20

Black has a hard game to beat, as 24-20 is probably the strongest reply to the initial 11-15. The usual continuation is 8-11, 28-24, and Black must play very skilfully to parry White's attack. In fact those who are not well booked on the Black side of this game will do better to throw it into Bristol play by 15-19 after 24-20.

Paisley : 11-16 24-19.

White's strongest form of the Bristol. The next regular moves are 8-11, 22-18, 4-8.

Bristol-Cross : 11-16 23-18.

Another variety of the Bristol, giving White a good safe attack, and allowing Black several sound replies, of which 16-20 is the most powerful, although 8-11 is preferred by many. In the opinion of some writers 23-18 is the best answer to 11-16 as a starting move, and it is one of the oldest favorites.

White Doctor : 11-16 22-18 10-14 25-22 8-11 24-20 16-19 23-16 14-23 26-19.

A hard, critical game for both sides, confined exclusively to specialists.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENINGS.

Many other openings have received names, such as Liverpool, Choice, Leeds, Boston, Wagram, Waterloo, Douglas, Cross-Choice, Nonsuch, Virginia, Pioneer, Whilter-Cross, Nailor, Erie, Tillicoultry, Albemarle, etc., but they need not be taken into the reckoning of learners. As a matter of fact the odd and irregular openings are not often employed in unrestricted match games or other serious play, and the standard openings are so many that the beginner who goes to the books for encouragement is apt to leave them in despair and settle down on what is called "natural play." This is a sad mistake for those who are real enthusiasts, as there is a middle course that is sure to lead to continuous advancement. The "natural player" never gets beyond a certain near limit, while the book player can constantly improve his standing by study.

As seen in the foregoing pages, while there are many openings in the game of checkers, there are few that can be forced. The beginner, and the advanced student as well, will find that it is better to confine his own and his opponent's game to as few openings as possible, and to study those, and those only. The player who sticks to this idea, up hill and down, through thick and thin, win or lose, is bound to pass those in his class who make favorites of openings that cannot be forced.

All the possible first moves of Black, except 11-15, give titles to openings. It has been found that 11-15 allows greater variety than 11-16, and for this reason 11-15 is far more frequently played than any other initial move, and many more named openings spring from it than from the others. White can then at once force the Single Corner, the Second Double Corner, the Cross, the Switcher, and the Ayrshire Lassie.

White cannot avoid the Bristol (Paisley and Bristol-Cross being forms of the Bristol), the Kelso, the Double Corner, the Edinburgh, the Denny and the Dundee.

The Kelso and the Cross are frequently recommended as a good pair of openings for young players to adopt. Both of these openings are lacking in "style," that is, the automatic method of play characteristic of some of the other openings, but they lead to safe, sound and distinctly modern play.

Black's Most Popular Opening.

- 11-15**—Of the twenty-eight standard openings of both Black and White nineteen are started by this move. Each of the other six possible first moves of Black constitutes an opening in itself, but 11-15 does not, because it allows a much greater variety of sound play on both sides than any other starting move.
- 23-19**—Aside from 22-18, which forms the Single Corner opening, examined farther on in this book, 23-19 is easily first in favor the world over, and has been so for hundreds if not thousands of years. This move, too, permits such a vast amount of correct play by both sides that it does not give a title to the game.
- 8-11**—As will be seen by reference to the preceding list of openings, Black has other moves that narrow White's play more than this does, but still 8-11 surpasses them all in general favor.
- 22-17**—The remarks on the preceding move apply to this one so far as popularity is concerned.
- 4-8**—Now the historic Old Fourteenth opening is completed. This is the formation usually shown to tyros as the strongest combination Black can make at the beginning of the game. One famous player is on record as saying that when he began to study checkers he felt that in this series of moves he had run across an invincible combination for Black. It does give Black a strong attack, and it is now White's business to neutralize it or turn it to his own advantage if possible.
- 17-13**—This is White's best move, but there is no absolute proof of this alleged fact. There is nothing but the experience and opinion of the best players to back up this statement. No doubt 25-22 is about as good. It is even preferred by some good players.

- 16—This move is intended to ~~put~~ ~~the~~ ~~king~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~center~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~board~~ ~~and~~ ~~to~~ ~~make~~ ~~the~~ ~~king~~ ~~the~~ ~~test~~ ~~of~~ ~~time~~.
- 20—White is thinking of the move 1. king to the center of the board, and in the end will be forced to do so, since in other moves he is forced to the center of the board, and in other moves he is forced to the center of the board.
- 15—A natural move to make, but not a winning move.
- 24—White's best, according to the chess computer, showing that it is often better to make a move that is a pawn or a knight at exchange.
- 11—Easily seen to support the attack effectively. Black might have gone 1-2 without fear, but that would be a waiting move, at a time when there is no necessity for it.
- 22—White has played to the side and has been on the defensive long enough, and now takes the best attacking move he can find.
- 14—Black could have gone 1-2 or even 1-3 with safety, but the former takes another man out of his king row before it is necessary or desirable, and the latter is needlessly daring. So he resorts to the back-up move given.
- 26—The strength of Black's middle-board play begins to be apparent to White, who takes a safe course and lies in wait for his opponent.
- 6-9—It is at this juncture that the full force of White's persistent side play and waiting moves shows itself, and Black realizes that the aggressive massing of his men in the middle of the board does not give him a patent right to a win. He is harassed, and sees disaster or at least a very difficult draw at every turn, so he himself breaks up his world phalanx by this desperate, but happily sound, exchange.
- 3-6
1-9
22—White is apparently rushing for that side square square.

- 1-6—Black's natural inclination at this point is to cease to mass his forces in the middle of the board and adopt side tactics of his opponent by going 9-13; but that only abandoning the style of play he has been following consistently as possible, but actually causes him to lose the following old-time stroke: 9-13 22-17 13-22 11-20 21-17 14-21 23-14 10-17 25-2. Black might have moved 3-8 in place of 1-6, but the latter is preferred.
- 22-17—Continuing on his course, although 32-28 would serve very well.
- 18-22—Ignoring 9-13, which is perfectly sound, Black sticks to his original idea of a middle-board attack.
- 25-18
15-22
23-18—If White had made it 17-13, Black could win, according to the books by 14-17.
- 14-23
27-18—White's game looks scattered and ragged, but he has maintained a very strong king row, has broken up Black's pyramid, and has forced him to the side.
- 9-13—It is useless for Black to try to keep up his method of going 3-8, as White would follow out his own general plan of moving to the side and waiting by 32-28, which would win.
- 17-14—This looks very bold, since it offers Black a chance to get a man right away, but Black's advantage is only momentary, as the following moves show:
- 10-17
21-14
6-10
30-25
10-17
25-21
22-26
21-14—An inexperienced player is apt to overlook play of this sort, which enables White to get his man back by a simple process of reasoning—merely observing, in fact, that Black's man on 17 will be temporarily blocked when he has a man on 21.

26-30—To regain the man which White wins by his next move. Before going 26-30 some crackajack players sacrifice a piece by 12-16. Learners should not attempt sacrifices unless sure of the after play.

19-15—Of course.

30-26—Again of course.

15-8
26-22
32-28—Beginners disregard moves of this kind in their anxiety to save the man attacked as long as possible. Nervous play at such a point is likely to be disastrous.

22-15
24-19
15-24
28-19—How easily White ended the career of that powerful king!

13-17—The ending has arrived, and Black thinks he may be able to win one of White's exposed men, and he avoids 7 10, which would be a bid for a draw.

8-4—White has no fear of Black's being able to get back in time to do any harm.

17-22
4-8
22-26
19-15
Draw—Further play is unnecessary, as neither side can hope to force the other into any position that does not end in a draw. This may not be clear to the tyro, and there is no way to make it apparent to him.

Such is the the standard line of the famous Old Fourteenth opening as it has been played for over a century. While no one can prove that these moves are the strongest that each side can make as the game proceeds, they are unquestionably sound and are probably the best.

White's Most Popular Opening.

- 11-15—Unless this is made the initial move White cannot get the game here recorded, and as Black has the choice of seven starting moves, any of which is good, it may seem to the novice that no set of moves should be put down as "White's Most Popular Opening." The fact is, however, that Black's most popular move at the start is 11-15, and the most frequent reply is necessarily White's most popular opening.
- 22-18—This forms the "Single Corner," by all odds the most frequently occurring opening in the game of checkers. In this respect it is far ahead of the "Old Fourteenth," which Black is not so likely to be able to force on his opponent. No other opening has received so much attention among all classes of players from the champions (there are no "masters" in checkers) down to the home circle.
- 15-22
26-18—The 26-17 jump is sometimes played to get the opening away from the books, but it is regarded as weak although supposed to be sound. In spite of its popularity the "Single Corner" is a hard game for White, and that is why 26-17 has received considerable attention, but it has nothing in its favor except as a novel departure from the beaten track.
- 8-11—The old-time regulation move, 12-16 being now generally preferred by book players. Other less popular but at least equally sound moves are 9-13, 9-14, 10-14 and 10-15, which indicate the possibilities of the Single Corner opening.
- 29-25—Simply a safe advance. It is the common habit of most ordinary players to work the single corner pieces as much as possible in the first part of a game. The so-called expedient line is formed by 24-19 in place of 29-25.
- 4-8—Without any definite purpose, but sound and natural, waiting for White to come on.
- 24-20—Perhaps a shade stronger than 25-22, but usually running into the same line.
- 10-15—Black makes this aggressive move not simply because it looks good (for appearances are even more deceptive in the game of checkers than in the game of life), but because he has learned that it is good.

- 1—Comment seems unnecessary, but published play shows that if Black had moved 12-16 instead of 10-15, White would lose by 25-22, but could draw by 26-22.
- 3—Black could have forced White into a critical line at once by 15-19, but the move given affords Black more opportunities to win, and is consequently stronger than 15-19. In fact, White is already sadly harassed, for if he takes the "natural" move, 27-24, he runs into a loss that is said to have been well known to Spanish players long before the English-speaking exponents of the game began their compilations. The position formed by 27-24 at this point is popularly called the "Goose Walk" or "Farmer," and loses for White as follows: 27-24 15-19 24-15 16-19 23-16 9-14 18-9 11-25 32-27 5-14, etc., which gives Black a king and a winning position. The subsequent play may be found in any of the treatises on the game.
- 7—Thus refusing to be enticed into the "Goose Walk," above referred to.
- 1—Given by the authorities as much the strongest move Black has. The acknowledged weakness of 7-10, 9-13 and 6-10 cannot be easily demonstrated, but should be accepted as one of the facts of experience and analysis.
- 1—The line of play established by this move is selected from the text book of a compiler of exceptionally clear vision and good judgment, who says that for forty years this move was regarded as "untenable," 17-13 being considered the proper course. The play here given is said to have been published in 1889 for the first time, although the essential moves had been discovered by a famous expert who kept them "up his sleeve" for some important match. The records of the game of checkers are studded with incidents of this kind, illustrating in a convincing way the hidden possibilities of this viciously simple pastime. [The book referred to in this comment is Lees' Guide.]
- 9—That's the spot Black has been manoeuvring to get control of. Square 19 and its twin, 14, are the storm centers of the game of checkers. Until the peculiar importance of these two squares is recognized it is difficult for the student to understand the purpose of many of the moves in the first

half of nearly all games. Whether wittingly or unwittingly, Black is constantly aiming to get control of 19, that is to post a man on that square with the proper backing to protect him, or to be able to do so when pushed. [Ellsworth said he always felt when playing Black that he had the game well in hand when he had succeeded in safely planting a man on 19]. Square 14 does not seem to be ordinarily quite so strong a post for White as 19 is for Black. There is another pair of squares that may as well come up for remark now—the twins 20 and 13. (Twin squares, by the way, always make 33 when added, as 19 and 14, 15 and 18, 1 and 32). As a general rule, but by no means as a principle of the game, 13 is a stronger spot for White than for Black, and 20 is stronger for Black than for White. In the game here examined, for instance, 9-13, instead of 16-19, has been analyzed as a loss for Black. On the other hand White's difficulties arising from having a man on 20 are such that four times later on in the play he is forced to make one particular move at each stage, indicated in the books by a star (*), while Black's play is not hampered with a single "star" move.

23-16

12-19.

*27-23—One of White's "star" moves.

9-13—Good at this point, but not forced, as 11-16 has been worked down to a draw.

23-16

6-10—The value of Black's preceding move is now apparent and in fact was obvious when the 9-13 move was made.

*32-27—Another "star" move for White.

10-17

*18-14—White's third "star" move.

1-6—Black need not examine any other move, as the strength of this one is obvious.

27-23—The man on 14 must be protected.

6-10—Better than 15-19 or the more natural 6-9, as in the latter case White would at once cut for the draw by 14-10, 7-14, 16-7, 3-10, 23-19, 15-24, 28-19, 17-21, 20-16, 10-15, 19-10, etc. This play of White's could not, of course, be seen at a glance, but it is there, and it is demoralizing to reckon that anything will be overlooked by your opponent.

*31-27—The fourth “star” move of White. It is useless to attempt to explain why White has no other safe move at this stage, as the demonstration requires extended analysis of great intricacy.

2-6—Black might have captured at once by 17-21, which would almost surely win in ordinary cross-board play between equals, but is really so complicated for both sides, when the players are well booked on the position, that 2-6, a waiting move, is regarded as preferable.

23-18—If 16-12, Black wins by 6-9 23-18 15-19 27-23 10-15 23-16 15-19.

6-9—Another waiting move; better than attacking by 15-19, which, however, draws.

28-24

17-21

27-23

10-17

23-19

9-14

18-9

5-14

19-10

11-15

16-11

7-16

20-11

14-18

10-6

18-25

26-23

25-29

6-1

29-25

1-6

25-22

6-1

15-19

24-15

22-26

23-18

Drawn

The ending. As a rule, a player is thrown on his own resources in end-play, and his book knowledge is of little use to him. The “natural” player is always strong in endings, while the student of openings commonly loses his hold on the game when the ending arrives. To be an expert it is necessary not only to play correctly up to the ending, but to handle that part of the game with the utmost care and skill. In the ending here given White’s fifth move from the close, 6-1, neatly illustrates this point. Persistent study of openings, constant practice on endings—result: a good checker player

The fact that the Single Corner opening is the most popular debut in checkers does not cancel the other fact, that White is the under dog of the contest. Black seems to have the power to drive his opponent into desperate situations, in which the saving move is forbidding in appearance while the destructive moves are enticing. The popularity of the Single Corner is not due to its inherent strength, but to the “naturalness” of White’s reply to the ancient and honorable 11-15 of Black.

ADVICE.

All expert checker players are "book players." A "book player" is simply a student of the game—one who refers to the records for the correct move, as he would to a dictionary for the correct spelling of a word. Dictionaries do not always agree with each other; neither do checker books.

The most apparent characteristic of "natural players" is confidence in their knowledge of the board, not infrequently amounting to glistening conceit. It is not difficult for a person with a distinct aptitude for the game to become a first-class "natural player," recognized locally as an invincible champion and checker master. It is a task to become a fairly good "book player." Uncle Josh may be "cute at figgers," but that does not make him a good mathematician.

Do not trust to what you *see*; depend only upon what you *know*.

The player who starts the game has this advantage: he can force a named opening at his first move, which he may have studied to the exclusion of all other possible openings. In no other respect is the first player supposed to have any advantage over his opponent.

As each player has the Black pieces in turn, the beginner will do well to confine his study to some one of the Black openings that White cannot avoid and stick to that opening, accepting defeat, sarcasm and raillery as the natural penalty of his persistency. After a while he will find he knows something. The Double Corner opening is a particularly good one to adopt, as it has a restrictive effect on the power of the White side, and up to the middle game affords Black a far larger amount of what

may be called automatic play than any other opening that can be forced. There is a set style in the ordinary lines of the Double Corner that allows the student to proceed with confidence. The Kelso is preferred by many, owing to the fact, perhaps, that the Double Corner is currently regarded as a game for experts rather than novices. It will be found, however, that neither the Kelso nor any other opening that cannot be avoided by White seems to crystallize the play for Black as the Double Corner does, if the ever-present temptation to run it into the lines of other openings is resisted.

The second player, White, cannot force any opening whatever on his opponent. It is said that ten thousand variations have been compiled on the Single Corner opening alone. But even supposing a player could remember all of them and ten thousand more, Black could balk such a phenomenon by making some other initial move than 11-15.

What can the second player do to force the game into familiar lines? Nothing. There is one move, however, 24-19, that has a restrictive effect no matter how Black may start. It is good against every one of Black's seven possible first moves, and is the twin of Black's restrictive 9-14. Up to within a few years both 9-14 and 24-19 were generally regarded as reserve moves, not to be used until necessary or at least apparently desirable. Their value as initial moves has been demonstrated by experts during the past fifteen years. It may be said without hesitation that the style of game these moves lead to is not the kind preferred by "natural players."

The game of checkers is a matter-of-fact affair. It is a perfect problem in pure mathematics. "Take no

chances'' is the fundamental principle of checkers. Experts always "keep the draw in sight" as long as possible. The most successful players keep in the paths they are familiar with until forced out of them, or until their opponents expose themselves through ignorance or daring. That is why the draw is the rule and the win the exception in the contests of superior players.

The surest way to make rapid progress in the game is to take every opportunity to meet stronger players than yourself. More will be learned in losing a hundred games against stronger players than in winning a thousand from weaker ones. Choke or smother the idea that you have a local reputation to sustain. When that conceit gets into the judgment box of a checker player's brain there is little likelihood of his ever learning much about the game except cheap tricks and traps that are of little use in good company.

When you come across an opponent who is willing to allow you to count every drawn game as a win for your side, don't refuse the odds. Always try for the best odds to be obtained. In this way you prick the interest of your adversary, and cause him to avoid careless play and to do his best. You will be delighted to see how you are slowly but certainly absorbing the knowledge and experience he has accumulated. Thus you will gradually drive him from one line of play to another, until he refuses to give you any odds whatever. Don't rest there, confidently believing you are a finished player. Seek an expert, and after the meeting you will wonder how the idea ever got into your head that you could play checkers.

The first advice always given to learners is to play slowly. Be deliberate is a better way to put it. Five

minutes to a move is allowed by the standard laws. If you cannot pick out the course you wish to pursue in that time, you can probably do no better in a half hour's study, as you cannot hope to follow out all the windings of an intricate position. You are supposed to know your ground, and to deliberate in order to assure yourself that you are not in unfamiliar territory. A complex position cannot be analyzed by looking at it, and without actual recorded analysis nothing better can be discovered than the probably best continuation. [Ellsworth never showed any impatience with slow players. His common admonition was, "Take your time." He regarded slow, careful movers as a class above quick, brilliant players.] Checkers differs very plainly from chess as to time, for in the latter there are always many ineffective moves to be examined, owing to the retreating power of the pieces, while in the former every move is strategic, and instead of having a series of problems to handle as the game advances, you have one big problem from the start. That is why chess has been described as "what you see" and checkers as "what you know." But you must not imagine you can know it all; as previously stated, there are no "masters in checkers."

No advice having any point can be given regarding endings. It is a common saying among advanced players that "it's all in the end," which means that they follow well-worn paths far into the wilderness. The expert endeavors to force or entice his opponent into unfamiliar trails, but he never attempts this unless he has privately examined every inch of the way. The force of this remark will be appreciated by stating that one great player is known to have named to his intimates the two games he was sure of winning in a forthcoming match of

historical importance. Every first-class player is supposed to have "something up his sleeve," for an important occasion. The best way to learn how to play endings well is to examine the end-play of the published games of experts, without stopping to study the moves leading up to that point. Problems have their value, but a fondness for them is apt to put too fine an edge on the checker-playing faculty to stand ordinary usage.

Don't make experimental moves. Do your experimenting in your own private checker laboratory at home, if you must experiment ; but it is far more satisfactory to learn something known to be sound.

Don't deplete the gray matter of your brain on endings in which there is no evident advantage for either side. This point is covered by the standard laws. If your adversary is pig-headed you can hold him to the 40-move rule, which will make him prove that he has an advantage. Good players often avoid hard endings by taking the easiest route to a draw, although they may apparently have somewhat the better side of the position.

End-play in which there is no definite purpose is neither instructive nor entertaining. Mere stubbornness, for the sake of being stubborn, is characteristic of unintelligent players only.

It is a law of the game that the player having the first move must take the Black pieces. This prevents confusion, and is consequently a good law. Another rule is that the game shall be played on the black squares. That is a matter of no particular importance, and in fact, most of the diagrams in books and periodicals show the pieces on the white squares for the sake of distinctness. *These points* are covered by the notes on the standard laws farther on in this book.

There is no room for mercy in checkers. If you can get a man ahead, reduce your opponent's force as fast as possible by judicious exchanges. The game becomes child's play if your adversary expects you to be generous.

Learners frequently become "object struck," as they do in beginning to ride a bicycle or in starting to skate. Square 29 seems to have a peculiar fascination for novices when playing Black. The way in which young players manoeuvre to conduct a man to that particular spot has the appearance of a mania. When playing White the uninitiated rush for square 4 with only a little less avidity. These apparent vantage points often prove to be veritable prisons.

A stake is not necessary to make the game of checkers interesting, but it brings out the best play of opponents and thus ensures the most rapid advancement.

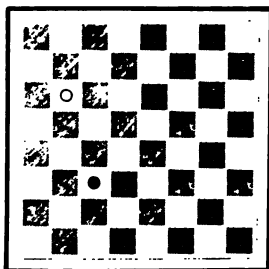
"What's the good of checkers?" is the common colloquial style of inquiry as to the *usefulness* of the game. The most serviceable retort is the child's query, "What's the good of anything?" The bane of civilization is the dullness of existence, the *ennui* of life, as the French name it. Checkers is a first rate antidote for yawning.

“The Move”

To novices “the move” is both a bugbear and a humbug. The truth is that “the move” is popularly credited with too much importance. Experts pay no attention to it until the game is far advanced. It has no known value at the start of a game. Even in endings it is as likely to indicate a loss as a win. An examination of two hundred endings and critical positions, taken at random, in a standard book of problems, showed 91 wins for the side having “the move” and 109 wins for the side not having “the move.” The chief usefulness of a knowledge of “the move” is in seeking or avoiding First Position and Second Position (see next chapter), and in recognizing them in all their numerous phases.

The unimportance of “the move,” except in particular situations under special conditions, may be appreciated by an examination of the following simple illustration:

White.



Black.

It being Black's turn to play, he has “the move” on White's piece, but it is of no use to him, because White happens to have a safe refuge in a side square. If Black's piece was a king, however, he could win ; but if

White's piece also was a king, Black could not win, because White could then retreat to the Double Corner. On the other hand Black could draw in this situation with a man against a king, because he has "the move."

The most common method of determining which side has "the move" is to count all the pieces of both Black and White in every other column of squares. If the total is an odd number (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, or 13), the one whose turn it is to play has "the move". That is all that need be remembered, for if the one whose turn it is to play has not "the move" his opponent must have it. Whether you start the count at the right hand or the left hand column is immaterial.

This rule is universal, however many pieces there may be on the board, whether men or kings or both, as a king is merely a crowned piece and counts one in the reckoning the same as a man. It is understood, of course, that the number of pieces on one side must be the same as that on the other.

At first thought it is natural to wonder why only the pieces in every other column are to be considered. This is because each piece is regarded as having a single adversary, which, if not somewhere in the same set of columns, makes the count an odd number for that pair. When there are more than two pieces on the board, instead of attempting to pair them off in order to determine which side would have the *last* move, in playing piece against piece without interference, the player takes a short cut by the addition process of the rule.

Elaborate instructions have been formulated for determining which side will have "the move" after an ex-

change of pieces ; but the simplest method is to regard the exchange as completed, and apply the rule to the remaining pieces. A recent commentator on the theory of "the move" says : "Expert players generally dispense with the theory, and depend on practical calculation." This is because there are various kinds of exchanges, such as the "one for one direct," the "slip cut," the "double exchange," etc., involving two, four, six or more pieces, as the case may be. The one useful point to be remembered in this matter is that the move passes to the other side the moment the ordinary one for one exchange is completed. In the "Single Corner" opening, for instance, White has "the move" at the start of the game, but immediately passes it over to Black by exchanging pieces.

THE FOUR POSITIONS.

Of the numberless endings occurring in the game of checkers there are four that by common consent are named First, Second, Third and Fourth Positions. Attempts have been made by some compilers to introduce a fifth position, but without success, although some of the situations presented as candidates for this honor are more elementary in character and of much more frequent occurrence in actual play than either Third or Fourth Positions, which, in fact, might better have been classed among remarkable problems. First Position and Second Position, on the other hand, are unique endings, always present in the calculations of expert players after the game has proceeded far enough to make it worth while to determine which side has the move.

FIRST POSITION.

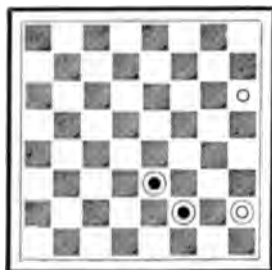
The player who succeeds in getting First Position against his opponent has an absolutely sure win in hand, but not an easy one. It is a checker joke for an expert who has secured First Position to allow his adversary to obtain a draw, and the smile thus occasioned is not so infrequent as the novice may suppose.

Black (or White of course, if the conditions are reversed) recognizes that he has First Position, in whatever form it may come up, by this test: He must get two kings against a king and a man, must have the move, and must be able to force the play to the right hand side of the board. An examination of the books in which *First Position* is illustrated shows that there is no partic-

ular phase of it that is regarded as the standard situation. Some even present what is called the "germ" of First Position, in which neither side has a king. But it is worth while to study all the preliminary manoeuvres that may be necessary to bring about the following position, the stage at which the fine work begins. The essential idea is to drive the king out of the double corner (to which he is compelled to flee from the earliest start, or allow an easy victory) and to prevent his escape to his own double corner, where he would be safe. The complete play on First Position, reduced to its logical terms, is as follows :

FIRST POSITION.

White.



Black.

Black to move and win.

6- 1

21-17- 5- 9
 1- 6
 17 13 10-15- See Note
 6- 1

9- 5- 9-13- 9-14- 21-17
 1- 6 1- 5 Same
 15-18 13-17 14-17- 21-17 as at A
 15-18 5- 9 5- 1
 21-17- 5- 9 17-13-17-22 17-13-14- 9
 Same as 18-22 9- 6 9-13 Same Same
 at B 1- 5 21-17 13-17 22-25-21-17 as at C as at A
 22-18 15-18 15-18 15-10
 9- 6- 9-13 17-13 25-29
 18-22 18-22 18-22
 18-15 21-17 21-17
 5- 1 22-18

6- 1- 6- 2-21-17 17-14
 15-10 15-10 22-18
 21-17 5- 1 14-9-14-10-13- 9
 15- 9 1- 5 18 14 1- 6
 17-13 6- 2- 6- 9 9- 6 10- 7
 9- 5 15-18 A 5- 1 14- 9
 2- 7 15-18 6- 2
 1- 6 18-14
 7-11 9- 5- 9-13-17-14-17-13
 6-10 B 1- 6 1- 6 18-15
 18-22 9- 5- 9-14
 15-10 Same as
 5- 9-13- 9 at C
 1- 5 10-14

17-13-17-14
 1- 6
 22-18 5- 1
 6- 2
 5- 9 1- 5-14- 9-14-10
 22-17 22-17 22-18
 18-15 14-10 1- 5 1- 5
 17-14 17-14 18-14

9- 5- 9-14
 15-10 C
 5- 9 1- 5
 1- 5

13- 9-14-17
 15-10 15-10
 17-22
 10-14
 22-26-13- 9-22-25
 14-18 14-17 5- 1
 25-22
 1- 6
 22-25
 6-10
 25-22
 10-15
 22-26
 15-18

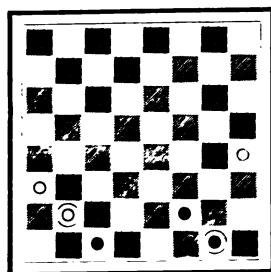
NOTE.—This move is necessary, because if Black attacked the king by 1-5, White would exchange 9-14, thus getting the move and so forcing a But if the man were back on 30 (or 29), White not exchange, and 1-5 would then be correct, drawing White into 13. This now looks like a different problem from that shown in the diagram, but by 10-14 Black prevents the escape of the king, and at best White can do inevitably leads him into some of the situations found in the analysis given, or the man and king become hopelessly separated and also cut off from any further co-operation. It is sometimes said, in half jest, that there is a trick in this Position, not fully understood by the ordinary good players. The point covered by this note is the thing referred to. To understand the matter clearly change the position shown in the diagram by showing the man on 21 to 30, and proceed as follows :

6-1
 5-9—30-25, 10-14, forcing the man into 21
 1-5
 9-13
 10-14— as noted above.
 13-9—20-25, 5-1, 25-21, 1-6, 13-17, 14-18, 17-13, 18-22
 14-18
 9-6
 18-15
 30-25
 15-18
 6-10—25-21, 18-15, 21-17, 5-1, 6-9, same as at A
 5-1
 25-21
 1-5
 10-6
 18-15
 21-17
 5-1
 6-9—same as at A

SECOND POSITION.

Eighty-three moves are required to win Second Position from its starting point. Consequently the situation seems formidable. The fact is, however, that Second Position becomes a child's problem, a mechanical operation, when understood. On the other hand, its mechanism is as wonderful as it is simple, and is a fine illustration of the fact that the vitals of checkers are hidden—not seen, but known. Second Position starts at the point shown in the following diagram, the chief distinguishing characteristics of which are that Black (or White, of course, if the conditions are reversed) has the move and his opponent has two single pieces on opposite sides of the board, on 12 and 13 :

White.



Black.

Black to move and win.

It is seen that White's two single pieces are cornered, while the king is free to run over to his own double corner. To win this position in an automatic way all Black has to remember is that he must get three kings, and put them in their order on 11, 14 and 6, indicated in black

type below. This enables him to make the two exchanges necessary to win, a culmination it is extremely unlikely he could foresee from the start, yet singularly simple in principle, as seen in the solution :

1 5	7 10	27 23	24 27	10 6	23 18
8 11	19 23	32 28	28 24	24 19	8 4
5 9	10 15	23 18	27 32	14 10	18 14
11 15	23 27	28 24	24 28	19 24	4 8
9 14	15 19	18 14	32 27	10 15	6 1
15 11	27 32	24 19	28 32	24 28	8 11
14 18	19 24	6 10	27 24	15 19	14 9
11 16	32 28	19 23	32 28	28 32	13 6
18 15	24 27	10 15	24 19	19 24	1 10
16 20	28 32	23 27	28 32	32 28	11 16
15 11	27 31	15 19	19 15	11 16	10 15
20 24	32 28	27 32	32 28	28 19	16 20
3 7	31 27	19 24	15 10	16 23	15 19
24 19	28 32	32 28	28 24	12 8	

THIRD POSITION.

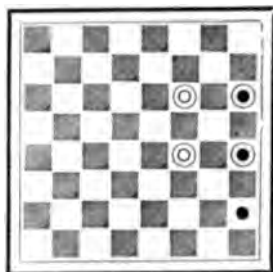
One of the latest books on checkers ignores Third Position, and in place of it presents "a very useful position." Another compiler, referring to Third Position, says : "It is so critical that a single weak move on the part of Black enables White to draw"; and he mentions one famous player in particular who has drawn it "on many occasions." The points for the student to bear in mind, however, are these : that the situation here presented is commonly ("universally," according to some writers) known as Third Position ; that it is a very difficult problem to completely comprehend ; and that with natural play on both sides Black is more likely to win than White is to draw.

Every nut has a kernel. The kernel of third position may be brought to light by removing one king from each side and placing the remaining pieces as follows: Black man on 13, Black king on 17, White king on 18, as shown in problem No. 5, on page 45. The draw in that situation is so plainly apparent that the learner may wonder why, when Black secures Third Position, he does not keep his man off square 13, and try to conduct him across the middle of the board instead of along the side. That is just what Black should try to do, but it happens that White can force Black's man into 13, and for this reason Black has to keep the "kernel" in mind in handling his kings. Black's main purpose is to make the man a king, or separate White's kings so they cannot co-operate. White's chief idea is to keep his kings together on his own side of the board and to advance only far enough to drive Black's man into 13.

In the solution of Third Position given on the next page, Black makes a number of moves that appear purposeless, or at least arbitrary, because they seem to have little bearing on the situation, and at several points Black could certainly vary without jeopardy. On the other hand he must play with the utmost circumspection, especially after his man has been forced into the pivotal square, 13. Perhaps the best way to get a clear comprehension of the course necessary to win Third Position is to study problem No.6, on page 45, which is the same thing put back to an early point at which White can force the draw he is constantly trying to bring about. If the player succeeds in mastering that problem, he is prepared to readily understand the following play :

THIRD POSITION.

White.



Black.

Black to move and win.

13- 9
 22-18
 9- 6
 18-22
 6- 1
 14-18—22-18
 5- 9 21-25
 18-23 18-16—14-17
 1- 6 1- 6 5- 9
 23-26 14-17 17-21—18-15
 6-10 6- 2 9-14 25-21
 26-30 17-14 18- 9 17-22
 10-15 25-22 1- 5 21-17
 30-26 15-10 21-30 22- 6
 15-19 24-26 5-14 1-19
 26-30 14-18 30-26
 19-23 5- 9 14-18
 22-26 10- 6
 23-18 9-13
 26-31 6-10
 18-22 26-31
 31-27 10-14
 21-17 31 27
 27-31 18-22
 9-14 27-23
 22-25 ——— 14-10
 2- 7 23-19
 25-22 10-14
 7-11 19-15
 22-26—22-18 14- 9
 11-15 23-27 15-10
 25-22 18-22
 23-27 11-15
 22-26—22-26
 27-24
 26-22
 24-20
 22-26
 20-16
 26-22
 16-12
 22-26
 12- 8
 26-22
 8- 3
 14- 9
 15-10

FOURTH POSITION.

For at least a century Fourth Position has been recognized as a standard situation, although not frequently appearing. It is one of the most baffling problems ever introduced into the game of checkers, as Black is apt to find himself again and again balked although systematically taking a different route at each turning point. On the other hand the solution given in all the books is as simple as the novice could wish it to be, and it is only when he begins to examine the numerous variations of White that the deceptive nature of the situation shows itself. Like other puzzles, however, it is not difficult when the key has been obtained.

Once in White's king row, Black, having a superior force, can win by natural play, although White may succeed in prolonging the process by clever manoeuvring. To get into the king row in spite of White's best play, Black must succeed in establishing a king on 28 and another on 20, and his third king must attack from the opposite side of the board, whether on 22, 13, or some other square. That is the key to the situation.

This will be understood by examining the succeeding analysis, in which the column of black figures shows the only solution of Fourth Position to be found in the various works on the game. A positively complete solution could, of course, be given, but that would involve a large amount of ineffectual play. That is why compilers always give the solution in the seventeen unvarying moves of the column of black figures.

White's chief variations are here presented, as some of them are more than likely to entice Black into taking the apparently direct course to victory—only to find that he has made many moves but no progress.

PROBLEMS.

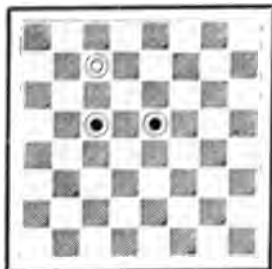
A first-class problemist or analyst at checkers may be only a mediocre cross-board player; but fine players are usually fine problemists. Young players who wish to excel in the game should avoid what may be called the problem habit. They should look on problems as useful exercises, and not regard them as the keys to success at the game. One popular problem book contains more than a thousand gems and masterpieces. It is conceivable that some phenomenon or freak might become figure perfect on every one of those problems, but a faculty of a higher order is necessary to recognize the approach of these fine problems in actual play. The principle, the theme, the essence of the idea, is the thing to fix in the mind rather than the particular "set" or situation of the pieces. The few problems presented in the following pages are supposed to be completely understood by every good player of the present day, just as the first four of them are elementary to ordinary players having no book knowledge. The ambitious beginner who finds difficulty in understanding them need feel no discouragement, for they are not easy, and when they come up in actual play they are rarely handled correctly by either side.

No. 1.
White.



Black.
Black to move and draw.
10-15
16-12
15-11

No. 3.
White.



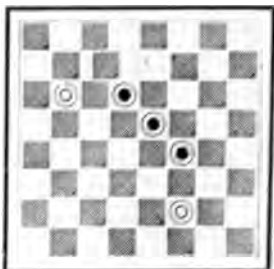
Black.
Black to move and win.
14-15
27-32
19-24
32-28
15-19
28-32
24-28
32-27
28-32
27-31
19-15

No. 2.
White.



Black.
Black to move and draw.
23-26
25-21
26-22

No. 4.
White.

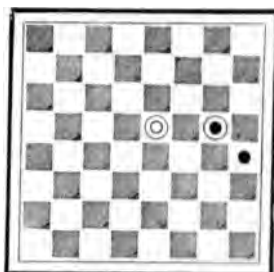


Black.
Black to move and win.
14-15
24-28
23-27
6-1
14-10
28-32
27-24
1 5-22-28
10-6 24-19
5-1
24-19

NOTE.—The four elementary positions given on this page are merely eye-openers for tyros. Nos. 1 and 2, show how it is possible for one king to draw against a king and a man or two kings. Checker players of the first rank sometimes overlook these simple problems in their calculations. No. 3 is almost invariably the first problem shown to beginners. No. 4 is usually shown novices soon after they have mastered No. 3.

No. 5.

White.



Black.

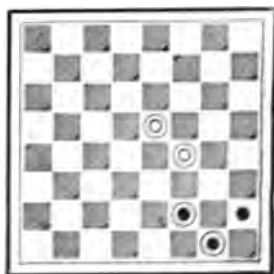
Black to move, White to draw.

NOTE.—This simple position, which is the same as Problem No. 1, is here presented because it has been referred to on page 39 as the “kernel” of Third Position. The fact that a single king may hold a king and a man in certain situations is the theme of the following problem, which, as stated on page 39, should be mastered in order to know what to avoid in solving Third Position.

6-9
14-10
9-13
18-14
13-9
14-18
9-6
10-14
6-2
14-10
5-9
10-14
1-5
14-10
9-13
10-14—18-22
2-6 5-9
18-22 10-15
6-9 9-14
14-17 15-19
5-1 14-17
17-21 22-18
1-6 2-6
21-17 19-23
6-10 6-9
17-21 23-26
17-14
19-22

No. 6.—WYLLIE'S DRAW.

White.



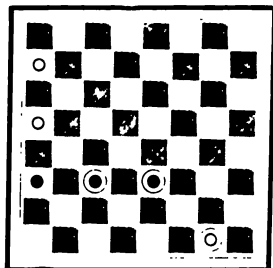
Black.

Black to move, White to draw.

NOTE.—The play ends at these points, because White's kings cannot be permanently separated and Black's man cannot get out of 13, as will be seen in the following continuation after 17-21 of the main line: 19-7, 21-25, 7-11, 25-9, 11-15, 30-26, 10-14, 26-23, 14-17, 23-26, 15-19, 22-18, 17-21, 18-22, 19-14, 26-9, 11-17 or 14-17, 22-19, 30-26. Any other course by Black brings the same result.

No. 7. HILL'S "VERY USEFUL POSITION BY E. DEANS."

White.



Black.

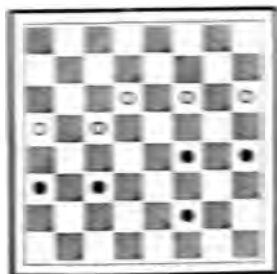
Black to move and win.

10-15
 1- 6
 15-19
 6-10
 19-23
 10-14
 11-15
 14- 9
 23-27
 19-14
 27-32
 14- 9
 15-11
 9-14
 12-16
 14-18
 16 19
 18-22
 19-23
 28-24—22-18
 11-15 11- 8
 20-16 18-27
 32-28 32-23
 24-20 20-16
 28-24 23-19
 16-12 16-12
 15-11 8-11
 22-18
 23 26

NOTE.—This problem occurs so frequently in cross-board play that it is well entitled to be called a "very useful position." How to hold two men with a king, as Black does in this instance, is one of the primary ideas in checkers that give experienced players an enormous advantage over novices.

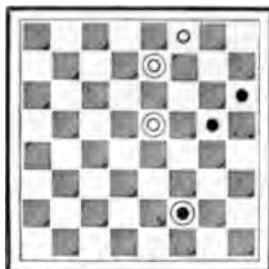
No. 8. TECHNICIANS' FIFTH POSITION, OR VARIANTS THEREOF.

White:



No. 9. THE HACKINTOSH PROBLEM.

White.



Black.

Black to move and draw.

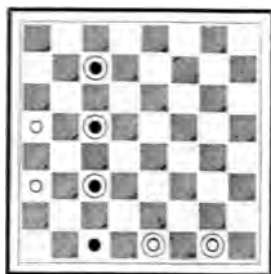
6- 9
 26-23-----26-31
 9-13 9-13
 23-19-30-26 31-27
 13- 9 17-22 13- 9
 19-16 18-25 30-26
 9- 6 21-30 21-25
 16-11 27-31
 6- 2 25-29
 11-16 18-22
 2- 6 17-21
 15-19
 6- 9
 19-23-30-26
 9-13 21-25
 23-26 18-22-19-23
 13- 9 25-30 25-30
 18-22 18-22
 9-13 9-13
 22-25 22-18
 13- 9 17-22
 26-29 18-25
 9-14 30-21
 29-26-26-23
 14-18 17-22
 25-29
 18-14
 26-23
 17-22

Black to move, White to draw.

White to move, Black to win.

No. 10.—BOWEN'S TWINS.

White.



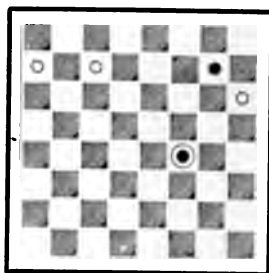
Black.

27-23
1-6
19-15
6-1
15-18
1-6
18-22
6-9
22-17
2-6
23-19
6-10
11-7
10-6
19-15
6-2
7-11
9-6
17-13
6-1
13-9-15-10
1-5 2-6
9-14 10-14
5-1 1-6
14-18 11-7-11-15
1-6 6-2 5-1
11-7 7-10 14-10-14-9
2-11 5-1 6-2 6-10
15-8 14-9 13-9 15-6
6-10 20-16 1-5 1-10
8-4 10-16 10-14 9-14
20-16 1-6 5-1 10-17
4-8 9-5 9-5 13-22
10-7 6-1 20-16 20-16
3-10 13-17 14-18 22-18
12-3 2-6 2-6 16-11
10-14 17-14 18-23 18-15
16-11 6-2 6-10 11-8
14-18 15-6 15-11
2-6 1-10 8-4
18-23 5-9
6-10 16-11
15-6 23-19
1-10 11-7
23-19 19-16
16-11 7-2
19-16
11-7

1-6
27-23
6-10
23-18
10-6
18-14
6-1
14-17
1-6
19-23
6-9
23-18
2-6
17-13
9-5
18-14
5-1-----6-2
14-9 13-9
6-2 5-1
13-17 Same
1-5-1-6 as at
17-14 9-5 A
5-1 6-1
A 17-14
9-5 2-6
2-6 Same
B as at
B
14-18
6-10
18-23
10-14-----10-6
23-19 23-19
1-6 6-10-6-2
5-1 5-9 19-15
6-9 1-5 2-6
19-15 11-15 3-7
9-13-9-5 5-14 6-2
11-7 11-7 15-6 7-10
14-17 14-9 20-16 2-6-12-8
15-18 7-2 3-7 10-14 11-4
17-21 9-13 6-10 2-7
1-6 15-11 15-6 10-14
13-17 13-17-----5-9 1-17 7-10
6-10 3-7 1-5 5-9 15-6
17-13 17-14-5-9 9-14 1-17
10-14 2-6 7-10 11-15 5-9
13-17 14-18 17-13 14-17
7-10 7-10 1-6 5-9
20-16 18-23 9-5 13-6
18-15 10-15 10-14 2-9
23-27 5-9
15-19 14-17
27-32
19-23
32-28
6-10
28-24
10-15

No. 11. TREGASKIS'S DRAW.

White,



Black.

Black to move and draw.

NOTE.—At the fifth move in the solution, Black goes 26-22 instead of 26-23 merely to bring about the position analyzed by Roger, which is as likely to come up as that of Tregaskis. Some of the variations in both end abruptly, but always at a point at which those who have mastered the positions can see the draw. So many figures and cross references would be required to prove the draw at these points that the most conscientious authors are content to state that White cannot then force an exchange or get his man into the king row.

RULES.

The common rules governing the game of checkers may be stated as follows :

The board must be so placed that the left hand corner square shall be a black square.

The pieces must be placed on the black squares.

The player having the black pieces must make the first move.

Neither player can have the black pieces twice in succession.

The time limit is five minutes to a move.

If you touch a piece you must play it.

You must jump every time you can. If you make any other move your opponent can compel you take it back and jump, or can let it stand, as he prefers. (This rule is universally followed, as it is founded in common sense, and is recognized as a necessary check to careless play or willful misplay. A law of the game, however, allows your opponent to attach a penalty to your failure to jump. It permits him to "huff" you, which means that after you have moved he may coolly take off your piece that should have jumped and then make his own move. The opportunity to "huff" rarely occurs in serious matches, and in ordinary contests the right to "huff" is never exercised except by inferior players, who know more about the small advantages incidental to the laws of the game than they do about the game itself).

The above "Rules" are all embodied in the follows "Laws," which by common consent have become the checker player's court of last resort.

STANDARD LAWS.

1. The standard board must be of light and dark squares, not less than fourteen and one-half inches, nor more than sixteen inches across said squares.

*2. The board shall be placed so that the bottom corner square on the left hand shall be black.

3. The standard men, technically described as Black and White, must be light and dark (say red and white, or black and white), turned, and round, and not less than one and one-eighth inch nor more than one and one-fourth inch in diameter.

*4. The men shall be placed on the black squares.

5. The black men shall invariably be placed upon the real or supposed first twelve squares of the board; the white men upon the last twelve squares.

6. Each player shall play alternately with black and white men, and lots shall be cast for the color, once only, viz., at the commencement of a match, the winner to have the choice of taking either black or white.

7. The first move must invariably be made by the person having the black men.

8. At the end of five minutes (if the move has not been previously made) "Time" must be called in a distinct manner by the person appointed for the purpose; and if the move be not completed on the expiration of another minute, the game shall be adjudged as lost through improper delay.

9. When there is only one way of taking one or more pieces, "Time" shall be called at the end of one minute; and if the move be not completed on the expiration of another minute, the game shall be adjudged as lost through improper delay.

10. Either player is entitled, on giving information, to arrange his own or his opponent's pieces properly on the squares. After the move has been made, however, if either player touch or arrange any piece without giving intimation to his opponent, he shall be cautioned for the first offence, and shall forfeit the game for any subsequent act of the kind.

11. After the pieces have been arranged, if the person whose turn it is to play touch one, he must either play it or forfeit the game. When the piece is not playable, he is penalized according to the preceding law.

12. If any part of a playable piece be played over an angle of the square on which it is stationed, the play must be completed in that direction.

13. A capturing play, as well as an ordinary one, is completed whenever the hand is withdrawn from the piece played, even although two or more pieces should have been taken.

*For the sake of distinctness it is usual in print to show the positions on the white squares. No confusion can arise from this practice so long as the custom of assigning the black pieces to the bottom half of the diagram is adhered to. The "bottom corner square on the left hand" must then be white. The *entire* catch phrase for placing the board and men correctly is "Right hand double corner".

14. When taking, if a player remove one of his own pieces, he cannot replace it; but his opponent can either play or insist on his replacing it.

†15. Either player making a false or improper move shall instantly forfeit the game to his opponent, without another move being made.

16. The "huff" or "blow" is (before one plays his own piece) to remove from the board any one of the adverse pieces that might or should have taken. But the huff or blow never constitutes a play.

17. The player has either the power to huff, compel the take, or to let the piece remain on the board, as he thinks proper.

18. When a man first reaches any of the squares on the opposite extreme line of the board, it becomes a king, and can be moved backward and forward as the limits of the board permit (though not in the same play), and must be crowned (by placing a man on the top of it) by the opponent; if he neglect to do so, and play, any play shall be put back until the man is crowned.

‡19. A draw is when neither of the players can *force* a win. When one of the sides *appears* stronger than the other, the stronger party is required to complete the win, or to show to the satisfaction of the umpire or referee at least a *decided advantage* over his opponent, within forty of his own moves—to be counted from the point at which notice was given—failing in which, he must relinquish the game as a draw.

20. Anything which may tend either to annoy or distract the attention of the player is strictly forbidden—such as making signs or sounds, pointing or hovering over the board, unnecessarily delaying to move a piece touched, or smoking. Any principal so acting, after having been warned of the consequence, and requested to desist, shall forfeit the game.

21. While a game is pending, neither player is permitted to leave the room without a sufficient reason, or receiving the other's consent or company.

22. Any spectator giving warning, either by sign, sound, or remark, on any of the games, whether played or pending, shall be ordered from the room during the match, and play will be discontinued until such offending person retires.

23. A match between equals, wins and draws to count, should consist of an even number of games, so that each player may have the first move the same number of times.

24. Either player committing a breach of any of these laws must submit to the penalty, and his opponent is equally bound to exact the same.

25. Should any dispute occur, not satisfactorily determined by the preceding laws, a written statement of the facts must be sent to a disinterested arbiter, having a knowledge of the game, whose decision shall be final.

† This harsh law seems necessary to cover possible trickery on the part of an unsportsmanlike antagonist.

‡ This law has the prime virtue of balking the designs of a player who may hope to accomplish something through mere stubbornness. It gives the referee the power he needs in ruling on cases involving mulishness or ignorance.

Chess and Checkers.

[This comparison of the merits of chess and checkers as scientific intellectual pastimes was written by the compiler of this book, and first appeared in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 28, 1897, with the pen name, "H. C. White."]

For more than twenty years I have been so fond of both chess and checkers that I have not been able to give up either in the hope of becoming a particularly strong player at the other. The faithful lover of Dameh will not "spoil his game" by coquetting with Caissa, and the true devotee of Caissa smiles in a superior, patronizing way at Dameh's ardent followers. "Checkers," he says, "is a first-rate game for women and children."

That remark may fairly stand for the attitude of the majority of chess players, and, in fact, for all who have never looked into the marvelous depths of the game of draughts. The idea is fostered by compilers of certain reference books, and by some writers who, in one way or another, have had occasion to speak of the merits of the pastimes in a comparative way. Chambers' Encyclopedia, for instance, says: "As far as the science of the game is concerned, it falls far short of chess, but is nevertheless a favorite recreation with many classes of people." The Britannica remarks: "The game of draughts has been exhausted; that is, a reply to every possible move is known by all proficients, and as there is no advantage in moving first, every game ought to end in a draw."

This conception of the relative merits of the game has been so generally accepted that even the checker players themselves are fain to admit that chess is a vastly superior game; always adding, however, that checkers is good enough for them. Now and then a thorough enthusiast in checkers will declare that he does not believe in the alleged superiority of chess, and his steadfastness is attributed to downright stubbornness, or to his allowing sentiment to warp his judgment; otherwise he would not hold out against the two overwhelming arguments that settle the question apparently beyond all logical disputation. These ponderous mental pile drivers usually assume such colloquial form as this: "Why, chess utilizes every square of the board, while checkers is played on only half the number." "Great Cæsar! Just consider for a moment the infinite variety of the combinations in chess."

Is there anything worth considering that can be said in reply to these crushing arguments? I think there is. Let me present the itemized arraignment of the uninformed against checkers.

1. It is a good game for women and children.
2. It is played on only thirty-two squares, with twenty-four men, against sixty-four squares and thirty-two men for chess.
3. The possible combinations in checkers are few in comparison with the infinite variety in chess.
4. The game has been exhausted.
5. Every game should be a draw.
6. Checker players as a class are inferior to chess players as a class in distinction, social standing, education and wealth.

These are surely very strong accusations, and they represent the substance of about all the wrangling these favorite pastimes give rise to.

In regard to the first charge, that it is a good game for women and children, there is no room for dispute. Its absolute simplicity in construction makes it a beautiful game for all intellects. The implication that it is, hence, not worth the consideration of masterful minds is absorbed by the succeeding counts in the indictment, and need not be taken up at this point.

As to the number of men and squares: The sixty-four squares of the board can be covered by the sixteen chess men in a less number of moves than the thirty-two squares by the twelve checkers. It takes five moves of each pawn to get across, one of each rook, four of each knight, two of each bishop, one of the queen and seven of the king, making sixty-two moves in all. The first four checkers require twenty moves: the second, twenty-four; the third, twenty-eight, making seventy-two moves in all. It is thus seen that in the matter of the number of men and squares, simply as number, checkers is to chess as 72 to 62. That is, the restricted power of the checkers makes the thirty-two squares and twenty-four men relatively greater than the sixty-four squares and thirty-two men of chess. In other words, it should take more moves to play a game of checkers than a game of chess. I think it will be generally conceded that such is the case. To test this proposition, I took Staunton's "Laws and Practice" of 1890 and "Gould's Matches of 1888." Staunton's Book III. gives twenty-five openings with seventy-four actual games by chess masters. I counted the moves in all and divided by the number of games. The average is twenty-six moves on a side to a game. In Gould's book I selected the Wyllie-Martins match of sixty games, because one of the conditions was that all the openings should be made. The average is thirty-three moves on a side to a game. The figures in these two illustrations are 72 and 33

for checkers against 62 and 26 for chess, and the conclusion to be drawn from them is, that, while theoretically the greater number of men and squares makes chess the superior game, practically it is the inferior as regards mere number.

The same thing I find to be true of the openings. The largest list of named openings in chess I have ever found numbers 45 ; the named openings in checkers exceed 50.

We now come to the third count—the “infinite variety” of the combinations. In Chapter V. of his “Modern Chess Instructor,” Mr. Steinitz quotes from an article in the *Chess Players' Chronicle* of 1878 by Mr. Edward Anthony, in which it is shown that the number of possible ways of playing the first four moves on each side is 318, 979, 564,000, and that at the rate of one set a minute it would take more than 600,000 years for one person to do them all. The same writer estimates that the number of possible ways of playing the first ten moves on each side is 169, 518, 829, 100, 544, 030, 000, 000, 000, 000. Mr. Steinitz remarks : “At first sight the ‘infinite variety’ of combinations that are possible may appear a most discouraging obstacle in the way of achieving success in the game.” The point is well taken, for these figures represent the sheer bosh of absurd calculation. Theoretically the game of chess is a problem of infinity, while the game of checkers is an exact finite problem. Theoretically the game of chess is as superior to checkers as boundless space is to the little terrestrial globe we occupy. But the human intellect is finite and the “infinite variety” argument falls of its own weight unless supported by practical tests. Let us see, then, how the accepted authorities on the two games, after the thousands of years each of the pastimes has been in existence, utilize their knowledge.

At the start of the game of chess each pawn may be moved one square or two squares at a time, giving a choice of sixteen first moves. The knight may begin the game, however, and he has the choice of two squares. There are two knights and their moves added to the pawns give twenty different ways in which the game may be started. Similarly, there are twenty possible replies by the opposing side at the start ; so that, as Mr. Steinitz points out, there are four hundred different ways of making the first move on each side without proceeding any further. In checkers there are but seven possible first moves for black, and the same number of replies for white, constituting forty-nine different ways of making the first move on each side. Thus we have theoretically four hundred to forty-nine in favor of chess. How is it practically ?

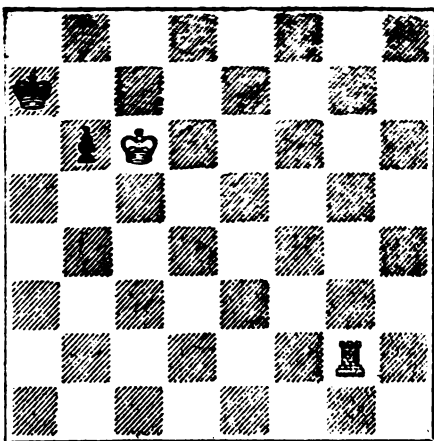
Staunton analyzes four openings in Book II. and twenty-five openings in Book III.; but under the head of "Holland Game and Fianchetto" he gives five varieties of the first move on each side, and under the "Queen's Bishop's Pawn's Opening" he gives a like number. Thus he presents in all thirty-nine distinct openings. Out of this number sixteen different ways of making the first move on each side are utilized. Taking the same number of named openings in Gould's checker games in the order in which they are given, I find that there are also utilized just sixteen different ways of making the first move on each side. So, while the chess player has a choice of four hundred first moves, practically they are of no more use than the checker player's forty-nine first moves.

Thus much for the starting of the game.

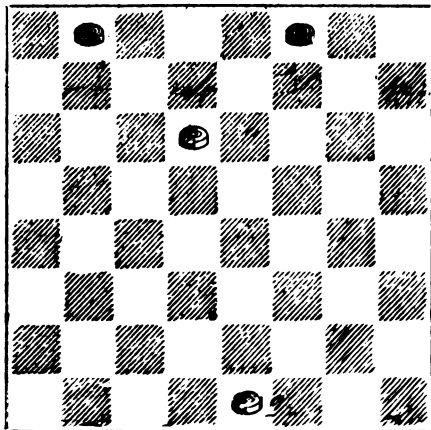
It would now be fair, apparently, to compare the "middle game" of the openings of each pastime, but it is probably not possible to do it in the practical way here adopted. Of course, the number of plausible moves in chess greatly exceeds the number of plausible moves in checkers, and it must be left as merely a matter of opinion whether it is more difficult to pick out what the books call "best" moves at that point in chess or checkers. To my thinking, the "best" moves are more apparent in chess than in checkers.

The endings of games, however, give a chance to show practical similarities or differences. It happens that there are four elementary endings in chess, and the same number in checkers. The number of "best" moves required to win in the four chess endings is respectively nine, sixteen, fourteen and eighteen; in the four checker endings, thirty-five, forty-two, twenty-four and nine—fifty-seven chess moves, against one hundred and ten checker moves. If the "infinite variety" count makes chess immeasurably superior to checkers, it would seem that the idea ought to show up to better advantage where practical comparisons can be made. But Mr. Steinitz says, "At first sight the infinite variety," etc.

Reduce each game to its lowest terms, and see what they show. In chess, take Professor J. Berger's king and rook against king and pawn, pronounced to be his finest problem by Mr. Sam Lloyd. In checkers take Dr. T. J. Brown's two men against two men, declared by many of the greatest checker players of the century to be a draw, until an analysis, covering hundreds of moves, finally proved the win. The game of chess is simply incapable of such intricate delicacy, and the "infinite variety" bugbear here shows the straw inside:



W. to mate in three moves—key move, R to Qb2.



W. to play and win—key move, R to e1.

The "infinite variety" of chess I might liken to the boundless space that envelops the atmosphere surrounding our minute globe. But the human intellect finds little use for boundless space in its practical calculations, and the atmosphere of chess probably extends no deeper into space than does that of checkers.

The fourth count: The game has been exhausted; that is, the reply to every possible move is known to all proficient, and as there is no advantage in having the first move every game ought to end in a draw. So says the Encyclopedia Britannica. Following are extracts from other sources of information:

"It (checkers) has been played in Egypt for more than four thousand years (the Egyptian-Arabic name is Dameh), and made its appearance in Europe only three or four centuries ago, when there was much intercourse between Europe and the Egyptian ports. The origin of the game is uncertain. It is supposed to have preceded chess, and it is certain that in Egypt, as appears from the monumental inscriptions, it was common in the time of the earlier Pharaohs. It was played then, as now, with pieces, all of which on the same board were alike in size and form. The modern Egyptians, who use pieces similar to those used by their predecessors, played the game as it is generally played in Europe and America."—*American Encyclopedia*.

"The game is supposed to have originated more than two thousand years B. C., and to have preceded chess. It was introduced into Europe from Egypt three or four centuries ago."—*Johnson's New Universal Cyclopaedia*.

"This interesting and highly scientific game has by several of the writers upon it been held to have preceded chess, of which it is supposed to be the root or source."—*Bohn's Handbook of Games*.

If the game of checkers has been exhausted, it has at least a very honorable career to its credit. It is strange, too, that the proficient do not retire from the arena, now that they know it all. But the fact is, the game of checkers is exhausted in the same sense that the King's gambit in chess is exhausted. This gambit has been analyzed so far that the reply to every immediate plausible attack is known to all proficient. Yet the gambit still remains one of the most interesting debuts in chess. If the meaning of the "exhausted" charge is that all the trunk lines of play in checkers have been analyzed to the end a well known fact has been stated. If the meaning is that all the variations in every line of play are known to all proficient, or to any master, the assertion is ridiculous on its face. A glance at a few

of the hundreds (probably thousands) of wonderful problems that are known to be the outcome of actual play is sufficient to show the absurdity of that assertion. In passing it may be said that checker problems originate much more frequently in cross-board play than do chess problems. Checkers is a positively precise—yes, an absolutely exact—mathematical problem, and hence it is conceivable that every possible variation of play can be mastered. But it does not come within the bounds of reason that any one finite mind can know them all. It is as easy to believe that there is a person in existence who knows everything contained within the covers of the books of the Astor Library. The genius of Shakspeare enabled him to carry the possibility of words to the limit of human expression so far as known. The genius of Morphy in chess and Yates in checkers was of the same origin. In checkers, as in chess, it is book against book up to a point, then it is mind against mind, or, rather, man against man.

The fifth statement that every game of checkers properly played on both sides is a draw is probably true. The precision of movement governing the pieces points to that conclusion as a fact. In this respect, then, how do checkers and chess compare? Mr. Steinitz answers that frequent question in the following extract from his book: "It is now conceded by all experts that by proper play on both sides the legitimate issue of a game [of chess] ought to be a draw." The "drawing masters" in recent international chess meetings must smile as they watch the "busted" balloon labelled "infinite variety" come flapping down to this poor finite earth of ours. It has no supernatural terrors for them.

A point frequently brought up against checkers not in any of the foregoing remarks and charges is that the draw is the rule and the win the exception, while the reverse is true of chess. The checker devotee regards that point (rightly, it seems to me), as evidencing one of the chief beauties of his pastime. The draw is the port he flees to when he believes he cannot overpower his opponent. The honor of not being whipped in a contest with a superior antagonist is greater than that of subduing an inferior.

In chess contests the power of the players is equalized by removing from the board a part of the forces of the stronger general. This practice has been condemned by chess writers, as so altering the play that advancement in the strategy of the game is seriously retarded. Players may well complain, as they frequently do, that they "don't learn anything" when they receive the usual odds at chess. The checker player who is weaker than his antagonist

receives the odds of the draws, or is allowed to reckon so many games as having been won by him before the play begins, or is to keep his opponent from winning a certain number of games straight away, or from winning a stated proportion of the series. Checker players never change the character of their pastime by removing pieces not obtained in the play.

To be able to prove a draw in a checker position accepted as a win is almost equal to showing a win in an acknowledged drawn position. Hence it is that the drawn games between experts are often more wonderful in their intricacy than the won games. In the history of the game there are many notable incidents showing at once the importance of the draw and the practical inexhaustibility of the game. But two cases (familiar to checker players generally) need be cited as examples. One of the most renowned analysts of the game, the late Mr. Bowen, of Millbury, Mass., offered a prize to anyone in the world who would show a draw for white after the famous 20-25 move in the Switcher opening. The controversy gave rise to such a division of opinion that it was not considered settled until Wyllie and Martins agreed to test it in twenty games, each playing against the 20-25 move in turn. In the meeting Mr. Wyllie proved the draw for white and Mr. Bowen considered him entitled to the prize. That point has thus been settled. But is it absolute—has that line of play been exhausted?

Another celebrated case is thus described by Joseph Gould in his well-known book: "This position was published in the *Clipper*. It had received considerable attention from most of the prominent players of England and America, and in no single instance was a satisfactory win proved; the opinion, therefore, became general that only a draw could be made of it. But Mr. Janvier's masterly play has at last brought out the true merits of the position, and has been hailed by all competent judges as a great achievement."

There is literally no end to checker discussions of the kind that have come up and are continually appearing. Discoveries and inventions in checkers are far more numerous than they are in chess. Moves that have stood the test of years of play and analysis and have been accepted as invincible have been mowed down by a stroke of genius, and a practically exhaustless field lies before the proficients. Corrections of corrections, followed by more corrections, are appearing all the time, and the analyzers of the game have been forced habitually to adopt the "I think" style of comment. More than three thousand variations of a popular opening have been

printed in accessible form, and yet one of the greatest students of that particular line of play says: "I believe there are boundless paths in it, many of which have never been traversed." —

The huge amount of analytical literature on the game gives rise to the impression that by books alone, without actual play, a master may be created. The fatuity of this idea needs no further demonstration than is found in the following extract from a treatise by William Strickland on the Ayrshire Lassie opening:

"Prior to, and, indeed, for some time subsequent to the period of the Lanark match, the opening was considered by the majority to be weak for White; but, as in the case of other suspected openings, Mr. Wyllie exposed this delusion by playing his favorite with telling effect against some of the most accomplished exponents of the game in England and America. Analysts admit that the opening allows unusual scope for the display of critical and brilliant combinations; and the result of my practical experience confirms an opinion that power on each side is evenly distributed. This opinion, however, is not supported by play given in the books. But it should be understood that some of the authors exhibit a strange partiality in their treatment of openings, a case in point being furnished by Drummond, who in the Ayrshire Lassie compels White to make the attack, hence no one will be surprised to find in his second edition of the Scottish Draught Player, that there are twenty-three Black and only three White wins; McCulloch's Anderson, nineteen Black and four White wins; Janvier's Anderson, thirty-six Black and four White wins; and in Lyman's book of problems four Black and two White wins."

After the memorable match between Yates and Martins the latter player is reported to have said that the opinion was forced upon him that Yates was so well posted on every move in every variation that there was no hope—no chance to catch him on a single move on which to defeat him. Paul Morphy was similarly posted in chess. It is interesting here, as a side remark, to say that it is claimed "a singular fatality attached itself to Yates in playing checkers—he was almost certain to be the first to lose a game."

The utility of the draw in the game of checkers has been referred to at sufficient length, but I cannot forbear to make a brief illustrative quotation from Gould's comment on the match played in Boston October 24 to November 6, 1882, between Wyllie and C. F. Barker:

"The match caused great disappointment and was severely condemned by the press on account of the narrowness of the results. No less than thirty-one Glasgows were played. We may, however, readily believe that orders were given to Barker, which he was bound to obey; and the orders were: If you cannot win you must not lose. Wyllie, who was ill at the time, was no doubt glad to get through without disaster."

The final count in the indictment charges that checker players, as a class, are inferior to chess players, as a class, in distinction, social standing, education and wealth. The charge is admitted without argument. The widespread popularity of the game, on account of its simplicity, convenience and inexpensiveness, makes it popular with people in the humblest byways of life, and brings the class average away below that of chess, which is largely confined to persons of the higher social grades. But this has nothing to do with the merits of the game as an intellectual pastime any more than the superior social standing of the congregation of a Fifth avenue church has to do with the correctness of its religious beliefs.

Having considered, in their order, the counts against the game of checkers, I will present some of the charges the draught player is wont to make against the game of chess. In the first place, he claims that chess is an artificial game made up to order after checkers were several hundred years old, and played on a checker board. He claims that it has been patched up and tinkered from time to time, and is yet subject to proposed "improvements." In support of his assertions, he quotes the chess historians, who have shown that the primitive game was played by four persons, each in command of eight men, grouped in the four corners of the board, with the powers of the pieces materially different from what they are now. After a while the game was "improved" by reducing two of the four kings to officers' ranks, and combining the four armies into two. The queen, he points out, used to move only diagonally, and could not exceed four squares at a time. The bishop two squares, with a leap thrown in, and the pawns only one square on the first move. But then the game was too slow, so the contestants used to make eight or ten moves at a time. Succeeding players allowed the king to take the knight's move once, and finally some unknown genius proposed castling. So many were the "improvements," he says, that some of the writers of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries mixed things up in an astonishing style. When, he con-

tinues, do you suppose they will give the proposed knight's move to the queen, in order to "improve" the game?

Another kind of retort which the checker lover favors is to declare that chess ought to be reckoned among the various pastimes grouped under the general name of "patience." All you have to do with a player of your own class, he asserts, is to tire him out. Nine off hand games out of ten, he boldly declares, are won not by skill, but by mere oversight of the opponent through lack of patience. Ten off-hand checker games without a fluke on either side can be played while one test of actual skill and knowledge is being made at chess. It must be pleasant, he thinks, to play a correct game for an hour and find all the preceding thought and study wasted by a bald blunder. Yes, he says, as ordinarily played chess is a "luck game," and that is what its inventors intended it should be, if we can believe your historians; for it was originally played with dice to guide the moves. "If in throwing the die the number should turn up 5, the king or one of the pawns must move," etc., is from one of the earliest works referring to the game.

The disputes regarding the relative merits of chess and checkers almost invariably arise from misapprehension. It is not necessary to know more than how the pawns and pieces are moved to be convinced of the intricacy of chess. Checkers, on the other hand, is so precise and simple on its face that only those who have delved into the exhaustless mine of draught analysis can form a just conception of its wondrous maze.

H. D. Lyman quotes Plato as follows:

Socrates—I cannot say that I have a high opinion of your teachers.

Alcibiades—Why, are they not able to teach?

Socrates—They could not teach you how to play at draughts.

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G. R. C.

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